



Selection criteria for senior management posts in central government

The Ministry of Finance, in collaboration with other ministries and as outlined in a government resolution on senior management policy in central government, has drawn up a list of selection criteria and methods for filling senior management positions. The requirements for these posts have been made more explicit and all candidates are assessed using uniform selection principles. Greater emphasis is placed on leadership and executive management skills.



Senior management in central government consists of the following:

- State Secretaries serving as Permanent Secretaries in the ministries,
- Permanent Secretaries in the ministries,
- Permanent State Under-Secretaries in the ministries,
- Directors-General and public servants of similar grade in the ministries,
- Senior managers of government agencies and bodies.

Defining factors related to proven leadership skills and executive management experience apply to all senior management positions where one of the qualification criteria is executive management skills.





Requirements for executive and senior management

Civil servants in senior management positions are expected to possess general skills in leadership and executive management as well as the ability to assume a broad perspective in social effectiveness and political steering. Given that executive and senior managers are expected to be able to convey the organisation's strategic vision and to inspire its staff to pursue the organisation's target, good communications skills are also deemed essential. The following factors play a part when assessing candidates for senior management posts:

- ability to perceive the overall situation in the operating environment,
- capacity to formulate a vision and adopt a strategy to implement it,
- skills to guide the organisation towards achieving the set goals,
- expertise to improve the organisation's capacity to serve its purpose,
- competence to evaluate and supervise the organisation's activities,
- readiness to bear responsibility for the operation of the organisation,
- people management skills,
- amenable to transfer to a new position after 7 to 12 years in one post.

In addition, executive and senior management posts may require specific skills depending on the post, such as:

- competence in a given field of expertise,
- management skills in restructuring.



Factors of relevance in the assessment

Executive and senior management positions in central government require both a higher university degree and effective practical experience in leadership. The selection process involves a comprehensive assessment of each candidate's capabilities and potential to succeed in a position of senior management or in demanding project management. When considering a candidate for appointment, experience in leadership and executive management applicable to the successful execution of the job in question play a key role.

Factors of relevance in the assessment

- type of government agency or body,
- hierarchical positioning of the post in the organisation,
- required range and depth of knowledge in the organisation's field of expertise for successful performance.

Leadership and executive management skills are gauged on the basis of the following:

- People management and structuring of the workplace requires the following, for instance:
 - *capacity to understand your own behaviour, such as your conduct in demanding situations when under pressure, and awareness that management is distinct from the rest of the workplace,*
 - *competence to impact staff performance and improve performance,*
 - *human relations and communications skills,*
 - *fair and equitable treatment of staff,*
 - *capability to create an environment for staff members that induces learning, innovation and workplace wellbeing,*
 - *ability to resolve situations of conflict constructively and to tolerate discord and criticism.*
 - *ability to be a stimulating example.*

- Greater efficiency and higher quality of processes and the supervision of operations requires:

- *ability to bring all resources into use in the best possible way,*
- *competence to monitor the organisation's efficiency, quality and effectiveness in society,*
- *skills to supervise that the organisation operates in an ethical way and in line with generally approved rules and principles,*
- *capability to coordinate and reconcile different operations and networks.*

- Achieving results and steering the organisation demands:

- *insight and an ability to set targets,*
- *competence in communicating the targets in a successful way,*
- *ability to create a well-functioning organisation,*
- *skill to delegate responsibilities and executive powers in an expedient manner,*
- *ability to manage your own time and energies; i.e. ability to prioritise and to restore energies as well as readiness to tolerate and handle qualitative and quantitative burdens.*



- Impacting the operating environment and management of change means:
 - *ability to acquire and retain a position of authority,*
 - *capacity to think in broad terms and conceptually and an understanding of phenomena in society,*
 - *advanced problem-solving skills,*
 - *readiness to adjust flexibly to changes and promote reorganisation,*
 - *skill to anticipate the organisation's potential for success in the future.*
- General expertise in public administration comprises:
 - *general knowledge of central government or other public administration,*
 - *competence in the operating environment,*
 - *broad perspective on phenomena in the society and economy,*
 - *capacity to exploit knowledge and competence,*
 - *inter-administrative cooperation skills.*
- The degree of competence in the management of EU affairs is determined by the requirements of each post, although all senior managers are expected to be conversant in EU matters at a basic level.
- Capacity for continuous development means:
 - *drive for autonomous development,*
 - *being open and willing to learn from experience,*
 - *being amenable to transfers from one post to another.*

The more senior the position in question, the more emphasis is placed on strategic leadership, cooperation with political decision-makers, the ability to impact the operating environment and to function as a role model and ambassador for the organisation's culture.

Versatile experience, new selection criterion

The Government Rules of Procedure specify that appointees to executive and senior management positions are required to have wide work experience. Experience of this kind can be gained in various jobs in central and local government, in the private sector and in the international arena. The range and relevance of every candidate's work history is evaluated individually for each government post being filled and from the viewpoint of the function of the post. The aim is to recruit people with experience from a variety of jobs and organisations.

Experience in senior management

Experience in senior management that is pertinent as a selection criterion can only be acquired in line management positions that involve leadership. Successful and effective job execution are also key assessment criteria.

Other requirements and expectations

Successful appointees for positions in executive and senior management in central government are generally expected to master both Finnish and Swedish. Requirements for language skills in other languages may be specified in individual cases for specific posts, and are mentioned when a position is being advertised.

The requirements qualifying for positions of executive and senior management are principally incorporated in the general definition for leadership and senior management. Where a given post being advertised demands qualities other than these, the specific qualities required must be taken into account in the assessment of the candidates and in the appointment to the post.





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